I asked General Scalon about the operation. He reported that the German artillery barrage was the strongest he had ever experienced. He was proud of his men. But with both wings and the rear unprotected, without communication with the corps, and in view of the enemy's superiority in number and artillery fire, he was forced to call off the attack and return to his old positions. I talked with the soldiers' representatives. They confirmed their commander's story. The number of casualties was unknown. Many men were missing, but they might have lost their way and were expected to return by breakfast-time.

I also learned that the maneuver demanded of the division was extremely difficult; the troops deployed along the banks of the river facing the enemy in the west had to attack in northern and north-eastern directions through a screen of dense forest. The division had successfully executed this operation. Then it lost contact with the enemy in the thicket and fell back to its old positions.

Back with the corps, I told Boldyrev all I had seen and heard during the night. He reproached Scalon bitterly. "If you could reach him and come back," he said to me, "one of his officers could have reached me. As to the men, what more could they do than they did?" He gave me a batch of fresh reports. I was concerned primarily with the spirit and behavior of the troops, but Boldyrev wished me to have a complete picture of what was going on. Again I wired to Riga and Petrograd: ". . . The situation remains very serious. A further setback is possible. . . . However, the reverse should not cause despair. I confirm the testimony of the commanding personnel. The army has done its duty loyally and has yielded only to the fury of the enemy's superior forces."

The Germans continued their offensive on September 2. They proceeded slowly, consolidating their positions, moving more and more artillery to the right bank of the Dvina. We had ten or twelve divisions against their five or six, but on our side confusion increased from hour to hour. As usual, the communication system had broken down. Each division was left to itself, and none knew exactly what was happening to the left and right of it. The units engaging the Germans or attacked by them felt outnumbered and outgunned, and the engagement ended with our troops in retreat. Moreover, division by division and battalion by battalion, our outfits were no match for the Germans. The enemy knew the terrain better than our commanders. Without contact among themselves, our regiments wandered aimlessly in the woods. Some reached the German lines and attacked but were beaten back by hidden German batteries. The bulge was growing. Back roads were crowded with soldiers who had lost their outfits. They were not deserters—all carried their arms and cartridge

